

CLASS WARGAMES

AUTUMN OFFENSIVE

Having rested after the exertions of the Summer Campaign, Class Wargames is now ready to resume its assault against the bastions of bourgeois conformity. Reinforced by our allies from **Cybersalon** and **Cyberonica**, we begin our Autumn Manoeuvres by engaging the enemy on the cultural battlefield of the Victoria & Albert Museum. Founded with the profits of the 1851 **Great Exhibition**, this institution is the trophy rooms of the former British empire. It was here that the miseries of satanic mills and slave plantations were transformed into a cornucopia of artistic treasures celebrating capitalism and imperialism. As the descendents of those who suffered, **Class Wargames** takes pleasure in subverting this foul ideological purpose. The shrine of the bourgeoisie must be transformed into a proletarian playground!

On this hallowed night of mischief making, **Class Wargames** has seized control of a key position inside the museum: the Dorothy and Michael Hintze Sculpture Galleries. This impressive collection of mythological figures and portrait busts is a reminder of how the rulers of the world's first capitalist superpower disguised themselves as Ancient Greeks or Romans. As the adjacent **Cold War Modern** exhibition shows, their American and Russian successors also warped time but in a different manner: dressing up their imperial rule in futuristic imagery. Intrigued by these congruities, **Class Wargames** is playing three different games exploring different aspects of these former empires of modernity: Coplestone Castings' *Kiss, Kiss, Bang, Bang*; TerrorBull Games' *War on Terror*; and Guy Debord's *The Game of War*.

Class Wargames is well aware that the Cold War was nothing more than the confrontation between rival systems of capitalist control: the diffuse spectacle of the West versus the concentrated spectacle of the East. In a late-20th century version of the Great Game, the two superpowers manoeuvred their military and political pieces in a struggle for hegemony over the global board. *Kiss, Kiss, Bang, Bang* is a modern parody of the spy stories which glamorised this sordid imperial conflict. *War on Terror* gives a contemporary twist to the parlour games which rationalised this irrational desire for world domination. *The Game of War* is an abstraction of the binary logic which underpinned the symmetrical battle of the Cold War. Playing these games is experiencing the clash of empires in microcosm.

Class Wargames is committed to subverting the ideological mechanisms which are used to keep us in line. The Cold War was a global game where the ruling elites of West and East wanted to be the only players. At the beginning of the 21st century, those once excluded are now taking their place at the board. The workers of the world are learning how to win the old bourgeois game – and writing the rules of a new proletarian game. As the temples of finance capitalism follow the citadels of Stalinism into the dust, **Class Wargames** is an anticipation of the sensual civilisation of play and creativity to come...

Ludic Labour!

The Players

Dr. Richard Barbrook

University of Westminster

Ilze Black

Waterman's Art Gallery

Lucy Blake

Software Developer

Mark Coplestone

Coplestone Castings

Rod Dickinson

Artist

Fabian Tompsett

Class War 1985

Alex Veness

University of the Arts

Forthcoming Engagements

27th November

State Hermitage Museum

St. Petersburg, Russia.

13th - 14th December

HTTP Gallery

Manor House, London.

CLASS WARGAMES

PRESENTS

GUY DEBORD'S THE GAME OF WAR

"The Workers' Army, organised and trained by the industrial drill-sergeant, is the sine qua non of proletarian self-emancipation, and of the toiling masses ceasing to be the prey of the first managerial intruder."

Class Wargames is playing Guy Debord's *The Game of War* using a replica of his original 1977 design for the board game.

Guy Debord is celebrated as the leader of the **Situationist International** and author of the searing critique of the media-saturated society of consumer capitalism: *The Society of the Spectacle*. What is less well known is that after the French May '68 Revolution, Debord devoted much of the rest of his life to inventing, refining and promoting what he came to regard as his most important project: *The Game of War*.

Politics is the continuation of war by other means.

The Game of War is a Clausewitz simulator: a Napoleonic-era military strategy game where armies must maintain their communications structure to survive - and where victory is achieved by smashing your opponent's supply network rather than by taking their pieces.

For Debord, *The Game of War* wasn't just a game - it was a guide to how people should live their lives within Fordist society. By playing this Clausewitz simulator, revolutionary activists could learn how to fight and win against the oppressors of spectacular society.

Wargames are a continuation of politics by other means.

Plus

Copplestone Castings **KISS, KISS, BANG! BANG**

A Cold War game of secret agent and super villains armed with weapons of mass destruction. Who are the heroes and who are the villains? The players decide.
www.copplestonecastings.co.uk

TerrorBull Games **WAR ON TERROR**

It's got suicide bombers, political kidnaps and intercontinental war. It's got filthy propaganda, rampant paranoia and secret treaties and the Axis of Evil is a spinner in the middle of the board.
www.waronterrortheboardgame.com

Alex Veness

XENON-EYE

This scanner camera's nightmarish, grotesque images are indebted to the Cold War: military innovation in this period enabled these weird images to represent contemporary life in a society still in the process of adjusting to the post Cold War condition.

The Game of War

Guy Debord and Alice Becker-Ho's book & game is available from the V&A shop or

Atlas Press

27 Old Gloucester Street
LONDON WC1N 3XX

www.atlaspress.co.uk